

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers in Britain)

Whistleblowing Procedure

This procedure sets out the steps that an employee contemplating “Whistleblowing” should take.

1. Raising a concern – independent advice

- For independent advice employees should contact Protect (protect-advice.org.uk/) on 020 3117 2520 or by using the webform here <https://protect-advice.org.uk/contact-protect-advice-line/>, their trade union or the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).

2. Raising a concern – Internally

- 2.1 Any concern about malpractice or wrongdoing should be reported in the first instance to your line manager or relevant member of Management Meeting, who will decide whether they can take forward the disclosure or whether it will need to be escalated.
- 2.2 If you feel unable to report your concern to either of the above it should be reported to the Recording Clerk.
- 2.3 If you feel unable to report the concern to the Recording Clerk it should be reported to the Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees.
- 2.4 Your concern can be raised orally but it is preferable to receive it in writing, setting out the background to the concern, including dates, times etc. If the disclosure is made orally then the person to whom the disclosure is made will make a record of it.
- 2.5 If you wish to have your identity protected, your name will not be disclosed without your consent. However, in some cases it may not be possible to resolve the concern without revealing your identity, and if the seriousness of the situation indicates that action must be taken it may not be possible to protect your identity.
- 2.6 The person receiving a disclosure should consult the Head of HR & Training about the procedure to be followed. The process is set out below:
 - Within ten working days of making a disclosure you will receive in writing an acknowledgement from the person to whom you reported the matter and an indication as to how BYM will proceed.
 - A meeting will be arranged to discuss the concern(s) raised

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- The matter will be investigated as soon as reasonably practicable by an appropriate appointed person.
- If you are required to attend meetings during the investigation, you will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague.
- Where it is considered appropriate, the matter(s) raised may be referred to external authorities to investigate i.e. the Charity Commission, the police, or auditors. It may also be the case that BYM carries out a disciplinary investigation.
- You will be kept informed of the progress of your complaint. The outcome of the investigation will be confirmed in writing as soon as is reasonably possible, however the detail of the action to be taken may not be appropriate to divulge e.g. pending criminal investigations or confidentiality issues.
- BYM will ensure that you receive appropriate support during and after the investigation.

3. Raising a concern – Externally

- 3.1 It is hoped that staff, volunteers and trustees will feel reassured and able to raise issues through BYM's internal procedure. However, BYM recognises and accepts that there may be circumstances where a "Whistleblower" takes the decision to report matters to an appropriate outside body, such as financial auditors, the Charity Commission or the police, if they wish to or if they are unhappy with the outcome of the internal process.
- 3.2 If the nature of your concern is such that you cannot raise it with any of the above, or if the internal channels have been followed but you still have concerns, you are entitled to make a public disclosure externally.

1. Disclosure for advice

A disclosure made externally for the purpose of obtaining legal advice is protected under the legislation.

2. Regulatory disclosure

There is special provision for making disclosure prescribed to regulatory bodies such as H.M. Revenue & Customs, Fundraising Regulator or the Health and Safety Executive, as long as you honestly

and reasonably believe that the concern, and any allegation within it, is substantially true.

3. Wide disclosures

Disclosures to other external agents or bodies, such as the police, the media, or MPs, may also be protected as a qualifying disclosure, but in addition to the requirements of public interest and reasonable belief, one or more of the following preconditions would have to be met:

- The individual reasonably believed that he/she would be victimised if the concern had been raised internally
- There was a reasonable belief that evidence was likely to be concealed or destroyed
- The concern had already been raised internally but without a satisfactory outcome
- The concern was exceptionally serious

- 3.3 Provided the matter is raised in the public interest, and it is reasonable in the circumstances to disclose it to an external authority, no disciplinary sanctions will result. This policy takes precedence over the confidentiality policy however, the disclosure should only be to the extent necessary to deal with this issue in question.